

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A plate changing apparatus for changing a printing plate on a plate cylinder in a printing machine for printing upon sheets being conveyed through the printing machine, the apparatus comprising:

a loader supported by a frame to be movable substantially parallel to a sheet convey direction and serving to feed a new plate to ~~a~~the plate cylinder;

loader moving means for moving said loader between a wait position where the loader is set to a substantially vertical state close to the plate cylinder, from a retreat position where the loader is set to a substantially vertical state away from the plate cylinder, and a plate feed position where the loader is set to an inclined state where a distal end of the loader holding the new plate is positioned close to the plate cylinder~~to a wait position close to the plate cylinder during plate changing;~~ and

a plate removal unit fixed to the frame to recover an old plate discharged from the plate cylinder.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): ~~An~~The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said loader comprises a guide for guiding the old plate removed from the plate cylinder to said plate removal unit.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): ~~An~~The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said loader comprises extracting means for extracting the old plate from the plate cylinder.

Claim 4 (Canceled)

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~The~~An apparatus according to claim [4]1, wherein said loader comprises

extracting means for extracting the old plate from the plate cylinder when said loader is located at the plate feed position, and

a guide for guiding the old plate, extracted from the plate cylinder by said extracting means, to said plate removal unit through said loader.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~The~~An apparatus according to claim [4]1, wherein

said loader comprises a switching guide member for switching a plate removal path for the old plate and a plate feed path for the new plate when said loader is located at the plate feed position, and

said switching guide member guides the old plate, removed from the plate cylinder during plate removal, to said plate removal unit through the plate removal path.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~An~~The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said plate removal unit removes the old plate removed from the plate cylinder through said loader.

Claim 8 (Canceled)

Claim 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): ~~An~~The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said plate removal unit comprises a removed plate guide board which guides and removes the old plate, removed from the plate cylinder, substantially perpendicularly along a front surface of a printing unit.

Claim 11 (New): A plate changing apparatus for changing a printing plate on a plate cylinder in a printing machine for printing upon sheets being conveyed through the printing machine, the apparatus comprising:

a loader supported by a frame to be movable substantially parallel to a sheet convey direction and serving to feed a new plate to a plate cylinder;

loader moving means for moving said loader cylinder to a wait position close to the plate cylinder during plate changing, the wait position provides the loader to be substantially vertical;

a plate removal unit fixed to the frame to recover an old plate discharged from the plate cylinder;

a base for swingably supporting said loader between the wait position where the loader is substantially vertical and the plate feed position where the loader is inclined and movable parallel to the sheet convey direction; and

driving means for driving said loader from the wait position to the plate feed position during plate changing, to move a distal end of said loader that holds a new plate to be close to the plate cylinder.

Claim 12 (New): A plate changing apparatus for changing a printing plate on a plate cylinder in a printing machine for printing upon sheets being conveyed through the printing machine, the apparatus comprising:

a loader supported by a frame to be movable substantially parallel to a sheet convey direction and serving to feed a new plate to a plate cylinder;

loader moving means for moving said loader cylinder to a wait position close to the plate cylinder during plate changing; and

a plate removal unit fixed to the frame to recover an old plate discharged from the plate cylinder wherein said plate removal unit comprises

a hook which is supported to be movable forward and backward into and from a plate removal path for the old plate, temporarily retreats from the plate removal path by a bent portion of one end of the old plate discharged into the plate removal path, and moves forward into the plate removal path by a weight thereof, and

hook moving means for moving said hook upward.

Claim 13 (New): A plate changing apparatus for changing a printing plate on a plate cylinder in a printing machine for printing upon sheets being conveyed through the printing machine, the apparatus comprising:

a loader supported by a frame to be movable substantially parallel to a sheet convey direction and serving to feed a new plate to a plate cylinder;

loader moving means for moving said loader cylinder to a wait position close to the plate cylinder during plate changing;

a plate removal unit fixed to the frame to recover an old plate discharged from the plate cylinder, wherein said plate removal unit comprises:

a hook which is supported to be movable forward and backward into and from a plate removal path for the old plate, and engageable with a bent portion of one end of the old plate,

a biasing member for biasing said hook in a direction to move forward into the plate removal path,

a prohibiting member for prohibiting forward movement of said hook into the plate removal path against a biasing force of said biasing member, and

hook moving means for moving said hook in a plate removal direction.